



STATE OF WISCONSIN
Division of Hearings and Appeals

In the Matter of

Dane County Dept. of Human Services, Petitioner

vs.

██████████, Respondent

DECISION

Case #: FOF - 220959

Pursuant to a petition filed November 26, 2025, under 7 C.F.R. §273.16, to review a decision by the Dane County Dept. of Human Services to disqualify ██████████ from receiving FoodShare benefits (FS) for a period of one year, a hearing was held on January 7, 2026, by telephone.

The issue for determination is whether the respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV).

PARTIES IN INTEREST:

Petitioner:

Dane County Dept. of Human Services
1819 Aberg Avenue
Madison, WI 53704-6343
By: Monica Johnson

Respondent:

██████████
██████████
██████████

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:

Brian C. Schneider
Division of Hearings and Appeals

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The respondent (CARES # ██████████) is a resident of Dane County who received FS benefits for a two-person household in 2024 and 2025.
2. The respondent began to work for ██████████ on July 22, 2024. She did not report the job despite having direct contact with an agency worker on August 6, 2024.

3. The respondent filed a six-month report form (SMRF) on January 4, 2025. She did not report the [REDACTED] job on the SMRF although she was actively employed. FS continued with no earned income budgeted.
4. On July 10, 2025, the respondent completed an FS renewal by telephone. She stated that she was not employed. FS continued with no earned income budgeted. During the two-week pay period that included July 10, 2025, the respondent worked 75.61 hours.
5. The agency received a state wage match in October, 2025 showing the [REDACTED] income. Verification of the income was obtained from the employer, and FS closed December 1, 2025 because income was over the FS limit. Pay checks were issued every two weeks with no breaks.
6. On December 4, 2025, the petitioner prepared an Administrative Disqualification Hearing Notice alleging that the respondent failed to report income. The respondent has no prior IPV findings. The mailed notice was returned to the agency as unclaimed (a notice also was emailed); the respondent nevertheless appeared for the hearing.

DISCUSSION

An intentional program violation of the FoodShare program occurs when a recipient intentionally does the following:

1. makes a false or misleading statement, or misrepresents, conceals or withholds facts;
or
2. commits any act that constitutes a violation of the Food Stamp Act, the Food Stamp Program Regulations, or any Wisconsin statute for the purpose of using, presenting, transferring, acquiring, receiving, possessing or trafficking of FoodShare benefits or QUEST cards.

FoodShare Wisconsin Handbook, §3.14.1; see also 7 C.F.R. §273.16(c) and Wis. Stat., §§946.92(2).

An intentional program violation can be proven by a court order, a diversion agreement entered into with the local district attorney, a waiver of a right to a hearing, or an administrative disqualification hearing. *FoodShare Wisconsin Handbook*, §3.14.1. The petitioner can disqualify only the individual found to have committed the intentional violation; it cannot disqualify the entire household. Those disqualified are ineligible to participate in the FoodShare program for one year for the first violation, two years for the second violation, and permanently for the third violation. Although other family members cannot be disqualified, their monthly allotments will be reduced unless they agree to make restitution within 30 days of the date that the FS program mails a written demand letter. 7 C.F.R. §273.16(b).

To establish that an FS recipient has committed an IPV, the petitioner has the burden to prove two separate elements by clear and convincing evidence. The recipient must have: 1) committed; and 2) intended to commit a program violation per 7 C.F.R. §273.16(e)(6). In *Kuehn v. Kuehn*, 11 Wis.2d 15 (1959), the court held that:

Defined in terms of quantity of proof, reasonable certitude or reasonable certainty in ordinary civil cases may be attained by or be based on a mere or fair preponderance of the evidence. Such certainty need not necessarily exclude the probability that the contrary conclusion may be true. In fraud cases it has been stated the preponderance of the evidence should be clear and satisfactory to indicate or sustain a greater degree of certitude. Such degree of certitude has also been defined as being produced by clear, satisfactory, and convincing evidence. Such evidence, however, need not eliminate a reasonable doubt that the alternative or opposite conclusion may be true....

Kuehn, 11 Wis.2d at 26.

Wisconsin Jury Instruction – Civil 205 is also instructive. It provides:

Clear, satisfactory and convincing evidence is evidence which when weighed against that opposed to it clearly has more convincing power. It is evidence which satisfies and convinces you that “yes” should be the answer because of its greater weight and clear convincing power. “Reasonable certainty” means that you are persuaded based upon a rational consideration of the evidence. Absolute certainty is not required, but a guess is not enough to meet the burden of proof. This burden of proof is known as the “middle burden.” The evidence required to meet this burden of proof must be more convincing than merely the greater weight of the credible evidence but may be less than beyond a reasonable doubt.

Further, the *McCormick* treatise states that “it has been persuasively suggested that [the clear and convincing evidence standard of proof] could be more simply and intelligibly translated to the jury if they were instructed that they must be persuaded that the truth of the contention is highly probable.” 2 *McCormick on Evidence* §340 (John W. Strong gen. ed., 4th ed. 1992).

To find that an IPV was committed, the trier of fact must derive from the evidence a firm conviction as to the existence of each of the two elements even though there may be a reasonable doubt as to their existence.

To prove the second element, i.e., intention, there must be clear and convincing evidence that the FS recipient intended to commit the IPV. The question of intent is generally one to be determined by the trier of fact. *State v. Lossman*, 118 Wis.2d 526 (1984). There is a general rule that a person is presumed to know and intend the probable and natural consequences of his or her own voluntary words or acts. See *John F. Jelke Co. v. Beck*, 208 Wis. 650 (1932); 31A C.J.S. Evidence §131. Intention is a subjective state of mind to be determined upon all the facts. *Lecus v. American Mut. Ins. Co. of Boston*, 81 Wis.2d 183 (1977). Thus there must be clear and convincing evidence that the FS recipient knew that the act or omission was a violation of the FS Program but committed the violation anyway.

Based upon the record before me, I find that the petitioner has established by clear and convincing evidence that the respondent intentionally violated FS program rules, and that this violation was the first such violation committed by the respondent. A recipient is required to provide correct and truthful information in all applications and renewals. See 7 C.F.R. §273.2(b)(1)(i). Wis. Stat., §946.92(2)(a) provides that it is a violation of the FS program to make false or misleading statements to program officials. Since FS eligibility and allotments are based upon household income and expenses, it is vital to the program that income be reported accurately. See 7 C.F.R. §273.9.

Clearly the respondent neither reported the income when she started to receive it nor did she report it at the two mandatory reporting instances (the SMRF and the renewal). In fact, in a recording of the renewal call the respondent was asked specifically about employment and she denied working; in the pay period that coincided with the call she worked almost 80 hours. The respondent claimed at the hearing that she would be laid off and was never certain of employment, but the employer’s pay records show no layoffs except for possibly in May, 2025 when she had a pay period of only 42 hours worked. However, by July, when she denied having a job, the respondent was working full time. The violation and the intent are evident. Therefore the petitioner correctly seeks to disqualify the respondent from the FS program for one year.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The respondent violated, and intended to violate, the FS program rule specifying that all income must be reported accurately as required by 7 C.F.R. §273.9.
2. The violation specified in Conclusion of Law No. 1 is the first such violation committed by the respondent.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is

ORDERED

That the petitioner's determination is sustained, and that the petitioner may make a finding that the respondent committed a first IPV of the FoodShare program and disqualify the respondent from the program for one year, effective the first month following the date of receipt of this decision.

APPEAL TO COURT

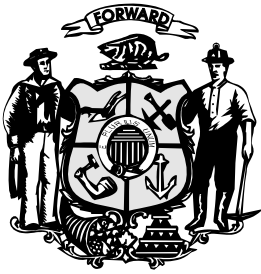
You may appeal this decision to Circuit Court in the county where you live. Appeals must be filed with the Court **and** served either personally or by certified mail on the Secretary of the Department of Health Services, 201 E. Washington Ave., Madison, WI 53703, **and** on those identified in this decision as "PARTIES IN INTEREST" **no more than 30 days after the date of this decision** or 30 days after a denial of a timely rehearing request (if you request one).

The process for Circuit Court Appeals may be found at Wis. Stat. §§ 227.52 and 227.53. A copy of the statutes may be found online or at your local library or courthouse.

Given under my hand at the City of Madison,
Wisconsin, this 9th day of January, 2026

\sBrian C. Schneider
Administrative Law Judge
Division of Hearings and Appeals

- c: Capital Consortium - email
- Public Assistance Collection Unit - email
- Division of Health Care Access and Accountability - email
- Monica Johnson - email



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The preceding decision was sent to the following parties on January 9, 2026.

Dane Cty. Dept. of Human Services
Public Assistance Collection Unit
Division of Health Care Access and Accountability

